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USCINCEUR & CINCUSNAVEUR FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AMGT, PFOR, TS, US

SUBJECT: PARM - ANNUAL POLICY AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT - PART I

REF: CERP 0001

FOLLOWING IS THE COUNTRY TEAM'S POLICY ASSESSMENT FOR TUNISIA WHICH I AM SUBMITTING TO THE DEPARTMENT IN COMPLIANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS IN STATE 38356:

A. U.S. INTERESTS

OUT MAJOR INTERESTS IN TUNISIA ARE STRATEGIC, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC. TUNISIA'S LOCATION ON THE SOUTHERN LITTORAL OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA COMMANDING THE NARROW PASSAGE BETWEEN NORTH AFRICA AND SICILY GIVES IT A GEOPOLITICAL IMPORTANCE DISPROPORTIONATE TO ITS SIZE AND RESOURCES. EVIDENT THROUGHOUT HISTORY, THIS IMPORTANCE IS A S CLEAR TO THE SOVIET UNION AS IT IS TO THE UNITED STATES, AND TUNISIA'S PORT FACILITIES ARE SOUGHT AFTER BY BOTH POWERS SECRET

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FOR USE BY THEIR MEDITERRANEAN FLEETS. OUR POLITICAL INTERESTS IN TUNISIA ARE RELATED TO ITS MEMBERSHIP IN SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL GROUPINGS (THE ARAB LEAGUE, AFRICA, THE "THIRD WORLD", AND THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT) AND THE GOT'S GENERALLY MODERATE APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS. TUNISIA AVOIDS LEADERSHIP ROLES THAT LEAD IT INTO CONFLICT AND CONFRONTATIONBUT CONSISTENTLY USES ITS

INFLUENCE IN FAVOR OF DIALOGUE AND COMPROMISE. THIS TUNISIAN POLITICAL ROLE HAS REGULARLY BENEFITED U.S. POLICY OBJECTIVES, ESPECIALLY IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, BY ENCOURAGING NEGOTIATION AND COMPROMISE. IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IT HAS WORKED AGAINST FRUITLESS CONFRONTATION AND IN THE NAM IT APPEARS TO BE FOSTERING THE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES. ALSO IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE, TUNISIA'S MODERATION HAS PRODUCED A RELA-TIVELY FREE SOCIETY THAT IS A CONSPICUOUS MODEL OF THE ADVANTAGES OF AVOIDING EXTREMIST, RADICAL THEORIES OF GOVERNMENT, ECONOMICALLY, TUNISIA'S EXCELLENT DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE SINCE 1970, IN WHICH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC PRIVATE CAPITAL ARE GIVEN ROLES TO PLAY, DEMONSTRATES THE BENEFITS OF A RELATIVELY FREE, MIXED ECONOMY. DIRECT U.S. ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL INTERESTS ARE MODEST BUT COULD INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY IF TUNISIA'S PETROLEUM AND GAS RESOURCES PROVE TO BE AS GREAT AS RECENT EXPLORATIONS INDICATE.

B. OVERVIES

1. THE UNITED STATES AND TUNISIA HAVE ENJOYED MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL BILATERAL RELATIONS SINCE TUNISIAN INDEPENDENCE IN 1956. PARTICULARLY IN THE SRATEGIC AREA TUNISIA HAS BEEN A CONSISTENT FRIEND -- ALLOWING US TO MAKE USE OF ITS POSITION WHILE NOT ALLOWINT IT TO FALL UNDER THE CONTROL OF HOSTILE FORCES. IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE TUNISIA HAS LONG BEEN AN UNWAVERING ADVOCATE OF COMPROMISE AND A VALUABLE CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION FOR US TO MORE RADICAL SECRET

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ARAB STATES CLOSER TO THE CONFLICT. THESE POLICIES, AS WELL AS TUNISIA'S MODERATE DOMESTIC ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL POLICIES, HAVE NOT BEEN WITHOUT COST TO IT. IT OFTEN FINDS IOSELF AT ODDS WITH ITS LARGE AND POWERFUL NEIGHBOR TO THE WEST WHILE ITS ERRATIC AND RADICAL NEIGHBOR TO THE EAST IS OPENLY HOSTILE. AS TUNISIA'S AGING NATIONAL LEADER WITHDRAWS FROM ACTIVE POLITICAL LIFE, THE POLITICAL SYSTEM FACES NEW DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN CHALLENGES THAT COULD PLACE IN JEOPARDY THE MODERATE POLICIES THAT HAVE BENEFITED IT AND THE UNITED STATES.

2. WHILE LIBYA APPEARS TO BE THE CLEAREST THREAT TO THE CURRENT TUNISIAN REGIME--SUPPORTING RADICAL SUBVERSIVES AND SEEKING TO DENY TUNISIA ACCESS TO PROMISING AND BADLY NEEDED OFF-SHORE PETROLEUM RESERVES--ALGERIA IS LIKELY TO BE THE MORE SERIOUS, LONG TERM THREAT. LESS OPENLY HOSTILE TO TUNISIA AND CURRENTLY MAKING CONCILIATORY GESTURES, THE GOA ESPOUSES DOMESTIC ECONOMIC POLICIES AND INTERNATIONAL CAUSES THAT ARE FAR MORE RADICAL THAN TUNISIA'S. IN THE

CASE OF THE DECOLONIZATION OF THE WESTERN SAHARA DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ALGERIA AND TUNISIA PRODUCED A RARE PUBLIC HOSTILITY. THESE DEEP SEATED DIFFERENCES HAVE APPARENTLY LED ALGERIA TO GIVE A LEADING TUNISIAN OPPOSITION FIGURE WHO SHARES ALGERIAN SOCIALIST THEORIES IMPORTANT FINANCIAL, PROPAGANDA AND MORAL SUPPORT. PRESUMABLY HE IS BEING HELD IN THE WINGS FOR USE IN THE IMMEDIATE POST-BOURGUIBA PERIOD TO BRING ABOUT A TUNISIAN REGIME MORE IN LINE WITH ALGERIAN POLICY AND IDEOLOGICAL GOALS.

3. THE KEY ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE IS THE TRANSITION TO THE POST-BOURGUIBA PERIOD. PRIME MINISTER HEDI NOUIRA HAS, IN LARGE PART, BEEN PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESSFUL POLICIES OF THE LAST SEVEN YEARS. CONSTITUTIONALLY, HE IS BOURGUIBA'S SUCCESSOR AND WILL ASSUME THE PRESIDENCE UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES. POLITICALLY, HOWEVER, NOUIRA HAS YET TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE SATISFACTION OF MOST SECRET

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TUNISIANS THAT HE HAS THE CHARISMATIC APPEAL NEEDED TO SEE HIM AND THE CURRENT REGIME THROUGH ABNORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

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SO FAR, NOUIRA HAS BEEN LUCKY AND HE ADMITS HIMSELF THAT THE HEAVENS HAVE VOTED FOR HIM BY PROVIDING TUNISIA WITH ADEQUATE RAINFALL SINCE HE ASSUMED OFFICE. GIVEN FAVORABLE CONDITIONS, HIS POLICIES ARE THE ONES MOST LIKELY TO QUARANTEE TUNISIA GROWTH AND STABILITY IN THE FUTURE, BUT THE "MANDATE OF HEAVEN" COULD ALSO CHANGE MAKING NOUIRA'S POLICIES LESS SECURE AND TUNISIA MORE VULNERABLE TO ITS ENEMIES. IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE CONDITIONS DO NOT APPEAR LIKELY TO REMAIN AS FAVORABLE AS IN RECENT YEARS.

- -- PETROLEUM PRODUCTION IS DECLINING AND WILL CONTINUE DOWNWARD UNLESS TUNISIA GAINS ACCESS TO PROMISING OFF-SHORE RESERVES.
- -- PHOSPHATE MARKETS HAVE RECOVERED FROM THEIR 1975 LOWS BUT THIS IMPORTANT SECTOR OF THE TUNISIAN ECONOMY REMAINS WEAK AND VULNERABLE TO FLUCTUATING MARKETS.
- -- UNEMPLOYMENT OF 15 PER CENT, MOST OF IT COMPOSED OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER HELD A JOB, CONTINUES TO SECRET

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RESIST AGGRESSIVE GOT MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND THREATENS LONG TERM ECONOMIC AND POLITIC IR ABILITY AND PAST HIGH POPULATION GROWOH RATES PROMISE LITTLE RELIEF IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

- -- TUNISIA'S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR, SUPPORTING 60 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION, REMAINS WEAK AND IS NOW THREATENED WITH A SERIOUS DROGHT THAT WILL REUDCE GRAIN PRODUCTION IN 1977 BY AT LEAST 30 PER CENT FROM PLANNED LEVELS. A MAJOR CROP FAILURE, WHICH IS A GROWING POSSIBILITY FOR THIS YEAR, COULD HAVE DEVASTATING ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES.
- 4. ADDED TO THESE ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS, TUNISIA WILL BE FACED WITH OTHER DEVELOPMENTS THAT WILL HAVE A DIRECT BEARING ON ITS ABILITY TO CONTINUE THE INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC POLICIES THAT HAVE FAVORED US:
- -- ITS TRADITIONAL AID DONORS WILL CONTINUE TO REDUCE THE LEVEL OF THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE GOT'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.
- -- OPPOSITION GROUPS WILL STEP UP THEIR ATTACKS ON THE REGIME AND ITS POLICIES, NOTABLY ITS QUIET ALIGNMENT WITH WESTERN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES.
- -- THE SOVIET UNION AND THE PRC WILL, IN CONTRAST

TO TRADITIONAL AID DONORS, BE INCREASING THEIR ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND THEIR CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS.

-- THE SOVIET UNION WILL CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO GAIN GREATER ACCESS TO TUNISIAN PORTS FOR THE USE OF ITS MEDITERRANEAN FLEET.

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-- LIBYA UNDER COL. QADHAFI WILL CONTINUE OR STEP UP ITS HOSTILE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE GOT AS PUNISHMENT FOR TUNISIA'S RENEGING ON THE 1974 MERGER ACCORD.

THE GOT'S CAPACITY TO MAINTAIN THE KIND OF SOCIETY IF WANTS AND FOLLOW THE KIND OF POLICIES THAT SERVE OUR INTEREST WILL DEPEND LARGELY ON MOBILIZATION OF TUNISIAN RESOURCES AND POPULAR SUPPORT, BUT IT WILL, OF COURSE, RELY AS WELL ON THE AID OF ITS TRADITIONAL FRIENDS TO SEE IT THROUGH THE DIFFICULT TIMES AHEAD. IN ORDER TO PRESERVE A TUNISIA THAT IS USEFUL TO US WE SHOULD SUPPORT, WITHIN THE LIMITS IMPOSED BY OUR RESOURCES, THE GOT IN ITS NATIONAL DEFENSE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES.

C. OBJECTIVES, COURSES OF ACTION AND ISSUES

1. STRATEGIC

THE KEY TO TUNISIA'S DEFENSE IS INTERNAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY SO THAT DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN SUBVERSIVES HAVE NO CHANCE OF UPSETTING THE REGIME. THE GOT CLEARLY RECOGNIZES THIS FACT. IT DEVOTES A MINIMAL PROPORTION OF ITS RESOURCES TO MILITARY DEFENSE WHILE EMPHASIZING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND VIGILANT INTERNAL SECURITY. TUNISIA, HOWEVER, CANNOT REALISTICALLY REMAIN UTTERLY DEFENSELESS TO ARMED INCURSION AND WE SHOULD SUPPORT TUNISIAN PLANS TO IMPROVE ITS DEFENSE CAPABILITIES. WE SHOULD RECOGNIZE ALSO THAT WE CAN JEOPARDIZE TUNISIA BY CALLING ON IT TO TAKE PUBLIC H

STANDS IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS THAT ARE DISTINCTLY OUT OF STEP WITH PRESENT CURRENTS IN "THIRD WORLD" AND ARAB POLITICS. WHILE TUNISIA WILL OFTEN DO ITS BEST TO RESPOND TO OUR REQUESTS, WE SHOULD NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT TUNISIA IS MOST HELPFUL TO US BEHIND THE SCENES WORKING QUIETLY FOR COMPROMISE RATHER THAN TAKING DRAMATIC PUBLIC STANDS THAT CAN ONLY GET IT INTO TROUBLE WITH ITS RADICAL NEIGHBORS. TO PURSUE OUR SECURITY GOALS WE SHOULD:

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A. MAINTAIN FMS CREDITS AT AN ANNUAL LEVEL OF AT LEAST \$25 MILLION, TO AID IN ACQUISITION OF MORE MODERN DEFENSE EQUIPMENT.

B. INCREASE TRAINING FOR TUNISIAN MILITARY IN U.S., ON GRANT BASIS OR AT MINIMAL EXPENSE TO GOT.

C. EXPAND SHORT TERM MILITARY TRAINING COURSES IN TUNISIA EMPHASIZING LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION AND OTHER NON-COMBAT SKILLS.

D. MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE MILITARY ADVISORY FUNCTION IN TUNISIA.

E. CONTINUE HIGH LEVEL DOD/GOT DEFENSE MINISTRY EXCHANGE VISITS.

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F. SCHEDULE SIXTHFLEET PORT CALLS IN TUNISIA AT ABOUT CURRENT LEVELS, USING THESE VISITS FOR LOGISTIC AND TRAINING SUPPORT TO TUNISIAN ARMED FORCES AND TO SIGNAL U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE GOT AT CRITICAL PERIODS.

G. ENCOURAGE STRENGTHENED SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN

TUNISIA AND FRIENDLY THIRD COUNTRIES (ESPECIALLY FRANCE, ITALY AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY).

2. POLITICAL

WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HEALTHY POLITICAL CLIMATE IN TUNISIA THAT WILL FOSTER STABILIOY THROUGH THE TRANSITION TO THE POST-BOURGUIBA PERIOD AND MAKE CONTINUED USE OF TUNISIA AS A TRUSTED ADVISOR ON MIDDLE EAST, NAM AND AFRICAN ISSUES AND A CONDUIT FOR OUR VIEWS ON THE MIDDLE EAST TOTHE PLO. TO PURSUE OUR POLITICAL GOALS WE SHOULD:

A. CONTINUE EXCHANGE OF HIOH LEVEL VISITS INCLUDING HIGH SECRET

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LEVEL PARTICIPATION IN ANNUAL JOINT COMMISSION MEETINGS AND USE THESE VISITS OF FRANK EXCHANGE OV EIWS ON IMPORTANT BILATERAL AND MULTI-LATERAL ISSUES9

B. INCREASE ORIENTATION VISITS OF LEADERS FROM KEY SECTORS OF TUNISIAN SOCIETY TOTHE UNITED STATES THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM AND ENCOURAGE SIMILAR PROGRAMS BY PRIVATE AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS.

C. OFFER EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT, THROUGH HIGH LEVEL VISITS, PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGES, OR SIXTH FLEET PORT CALLS, WHEN PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA PASSES FROM THE SCENE OR AT CRITICAL PERIODS OF REGIONAL STRESS.

D. ENCOURAGE THE REGIME TO ACCEPT THE LEGITIMACY OF POLITICAL FORCES CURRENTLY IN OPPOSITION THAT ARE WILLING TO WORK THROUGH ESTABLISHED INSTITUTIONS.

E. DEMONSTRATE OUR ACCEPTANCE OF LEGITIMATE OPPOSITION FORCES BY INCLUDING THEIR MEMBERS IN THE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM, WHERE POSSIBLE, AND MAINTAINING REGULAR CONTACT WITH OPPOSITION FIGURES.

F. ADVISE THE GOT THAT SERIOUS VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE USG TO CONTINUE ITS FULL SUPPORT FOR THE REGIME.

G. CONTINUE INFORMATION AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS IN TUNISIA THAT FAMILIARIZE THE TUNISIAN PUBLIC WITH THE U.S. AND U.S.G. POLICIES.

3. ECONOMIC

THE CURRENT REGIME NEEDS NO FURTHER ENCOURAGEMENT TO CONTINUE

ACTIVE DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN A MIXED ECONOMY. AN AMBITIOUS FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN (TUNISIA'S FIFTH) MAPS OUT A SECRET

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PROGRAM THAT THE GOVERNMENT CLAIMS WILL TAKE TUNISIA TO THE ECONOMIC "TAKE-OFF" POINT. WE SHOULD, WHITHIN THE LIMITS IMPOSED BY OUR RESOURCES, CONTINUE FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT AT CURRENT LEVELS FOR TUNISIA'S EFFORTS AND BE READY TO PROVIDE EXTRA ASSISTANCE IF SERIOUS ECONOMIC ADVERSITY JEOPARDIZES THE TUNISIANS' CAPACITY TO CARRY THROUGH WITH THEIR PLAN9 WE SHOULD SUPPORT TUNISIAN EFFORTS TO OBTAIN DEVELOPMENT FINANCING FROM NEW SOURCES. IN ANTICIPATION OF A GRADUAL PHASEOUT OF U.S. DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE EFFORTS, WE SHOULD ALSO GIVE GREATER ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRIVATE U.S. INVESTMENT IN A GWOWING TUNISIAN ECONOMY.

TO PURSUE OUR ECONOMIC GOALS WE SHOULD:

A. CONTINUE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS THROUGH 1981 WITH PROJECTS KEYED TO GOT PRIORITIES IN AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, SCIENCE AND TACHNOLOGY, HEALTH CARE AND HOUSING.

B. RESPOND QUICKLY TO GOT REQUESTS FOR PL-480 WHEAT SALES AS WARRANTED BY THE TUNISIAN CROP SITUATION AND U.S. SURPLUS AVAILABILITIES.

C. CONTINUE PEACE CORPS PROGRAMS AT PRESENT LEVELS IN COORDINATION WITH OTHER U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE EFFORTS.

D. ENCOURAGE OTHER TRADITIONALDONORS TO MAINTAIN CONCESSIONAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE PERIOD OF THE FIFTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

E. MAINTAIN CLOSE COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION WITH THE GOT INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCY /-08) AND SUPPORT TUNISIAN INVESTMENT PROMOTION EFFORTS IN THE UNITED STATES.

F. CONTINUE EFFORTS TO REMOVE DISCRIMINATORY PROVISIONS FROM TUNISIAN LAW THAT DISCOURAGE U.S. INVESTMENT. SECRET

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G. PROMOTE U.S.-TUNISIAN TRADE BY ELIMINATING BARRIERS AND LIBERALIZING FOREIGN EXCHANGE PROCEDURES.

H. OBTAIN GREATER DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE SUPPORT FOR BILATERAL TRADE PROMOTION EFFORTS AND BROADEN EXIMBANK EXPOSURE IN TUNISIA.

I. ENCOURAGE DIRECT U.S. PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT OF TUNISIAN PEOROLEUM INDUSTRY THROUGH EXPLOITATION OF OFF-SHORE RESOURCES.

J. ENCOURAGE SETTLEMENT OF TUNISIA'S BORDER DELINEATION DISPUTE WITH LIBYA THROUGH CARTOGRAPHIC ASSISTANCE TO THE GOT, CLARIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW GOVERNING THE DISPUTE AND ENCOURAGING REFERRAL OF THE DISPUTE TO THE ICJ.

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